

IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: NAKANISHI, Yukio et al. Conf.:
Appl. No.: New Group:
Filed: December 4, 2001 Examiner:
For: SHEET TOBACCO, AND PROCESS AND SYSTEM FOR
MANUFACTURING THE SAME

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

December 4, 2001

Sir:

The following preliminary amendments and remarks are respectfully submitted in connection with the above-identified application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

3. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to claim 1, wherein said tobacco powder layer has a basis weight of 30 to 200 g/m², and said carrier layer and said cover layer each have a basis weight of 3 to 50 g/m².

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4. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to claim 1, wherein said tobacco powder layer has a binder content of not greater than 15% by weight with respect to the tobacco powder material.

5. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to claim 1, wherein the binder is used to bind the tobacco powder material and also to bind together the plant fibers of at least one of said carrier layer and said cover layer.

6. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to claim 1, wherein the binder contains cornstarch.

7. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to claim 1, further comprising a tobacco particle layer sandwiched between said tobacco powder layer and said carrier layer or between said cover layer and said tobacco powder layer, said tobacco particle layer containing particles of tobacco stems and laminas.

10. (Amended) The process according to claim 8, further comprising an intermediate step performed between said forming step and said binding step, to form a cover sheet of nonwoven plant fibers covering the other side of said tobacco powder layer.

12. (Amended) The process according to claim 8, wherein in said binding step, the plant fibers of at least one of said carrier sheet and said cover sheet are bound together by means of the binder.

15. (Amended) The process according to claim 13, further comprising an infiltrating step performed prior to said binding step, to cause a solvent for the binder to infiltrate into said tobacco powder layer admixed with the binder as well as into said carrier sheet.

17. (Amended) The process according to claim 8, further comprising a step of forming a tobacco particle layer or between said tobacco powder layer and said cover sheet, said tobacco particle layer containing particles of tobacco stems and laminas.

20. (Amended) The system according to claim 18, further comprising a downstream-side forming device arranged between said powder spreading device and said pressing machine, for forming a cover sheet of nonwoven plant fibers covering the tobacco powder layer.

REMARKS

The amendment to the claims is merely to delete multiple dependencies and to place the application into better form for examination. Entry of the present amendment and favorable action on the above-identified application are earnestly solicited.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Version With Markings to Show Changes Made

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

The claims have been amended as follows:

3. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to claim 1 [or 2], wherein said tobacco powder layer has a basis weight of 30 to 200 g/m², and said carrier layer and said cover layer each have a basis weight of 3 to 50 g/m².

4. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to [any one of claims 1 through 3] claim 1, wherein said tobacco powder layer has a binder content of not greater than 15% by weight with respect to the tobacco powder material.

5. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to [any one of claims 1 through 4] claim 1, wherein the binder is used to bind the tobacco powder material and also to bind together the plant fibers of at least one of said carrier layer and said cover layer.

6. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to [any one of claims 1 through 5] claim 1, wherein the binder contains cornstarch.

7. (Amended) The sheet tobacco according to [any one of claims 1 through 6] claim 1, further comprising a tobacco particle layer sandwiched between said tobacco powder layer and said carrier layer or between said cover layer and said tobacco powder layer, said tobacco particle layer containing particles of tobacco stems and laminas.

10. (Amended) The process according to claim 8 [or 9], further comprising an intermediate step performed between said forming step and said binding step, to form a cover sheet of nonwoven plant fibers covering the other side of said tobacco powder layer.

12. (Amended) The process according to claim 8 [or 11], wherein in said binding step, the plant fibers of at least one of said carrier sheet and said cover sheet are bound together by means of the binder.

15. (Amended) The process according to claim 13 [or 14], further comprising an infiltrating step performed prior to said binding step, to cause a solvent for the binder to infiltrate into said tobacco powder layer admixed with the binder as well as into said carrier sheet.

17. (Amended) The process according to claim 8 [or 10], further comprising a step of forming a tobacco particle layer or between said tobacco powder layer and said cover sheet, said tobacco particle layer containing particles of tobacco stems and laminas.

20. (Amended) The system according to claim 18 [or 19], further comprising a downstream-side forming device arranged between said powder spreading device and said pressing machine, for forming a cover sheet of nonwoven plant fibers covering the tobacco powder layer.